



STING - Science and Technology for pollinating insects

In the last years, decline in the occurrence and diversity of all kinds of European wild insect pollinators, including wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies, and moths, has drawn public attention. Among the main driving factors of pollinators decline are land use practices including agricultural management¹. Despite existing policies and concrete measures put in place to conserve and protect pollinators, wild pollinators are in decline with numerous species going extinct or threatened with extinction. Action is therefore necessary to safeguard biodiversity, agriculture and food security.

In 2018, the European Commission adopted the first-ever EU initiative for tackling the decline of wild pollinators. The initiative provides a framework for an integrated approach to the problem and sets actions to address it, while contributing to global conservation efforts.

In this respect, the Commission indicates as priority to raise the awareness of the importance of pollinators, to engage the society-at-large and to promote collaboration between all actors to put in place actions towards pollinators' conservation, in particular in the agri-food sector (*Priority III: Raising awareness, engaging society-at-large and promoting collaboration*).

The STING project is developed under the framework of the European Initiative on Pollinators (COM(2018) 395).

An important action of the STING project is to engage citizens' knowledge and imagination to gather insights towards a collective approach to the conservation of wild pollinators. In STING we are exploring the value of immersive engagement activities and an ethos of care to design guidance on citizen participation activities.

In STING we envisage to work with both farmers and citizens to help with exploring the current terms of the debate, so that strategies can be harnessed to develop a more extended collective ownership of the decline of wild pollinators issue which threatens the existence of life on Earth. The engagement of both **citizens and farmers** is necessary in order to on one hand, reactivate neglected links of what different actors care about and act upon, and, on the other hand, to **co-create** situated civic interventions while developing **public meanings and values** around this high stakes and urgent collective matter of concern.

This process will empower citizens and farmers in their ability to propose concrete actions that eventually will offer support in the making of more robust EU policies.

Hence, the STING project will investigate how dialogic approaches among heterogeneous actors, in particular ordinary citizens and farmers, and where relevant other experts, may reframe the debate on pollinators decline and design the implementation of engagement activities at local level.

Ultimately, the STING project envisages strategies to ensure that the debate about pollinator decline remains politically relevant and socially meaningful over time.

¹ Potts, S.G., et al., (2016), *The Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production*, Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 552 pp